

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the existing set of Claims with the following set, in which Claims 1-26 and 40-1 have been canceled (Claims 1-26 having been canceled previous to this Response), Claim 45 has been withdrawn, and Claims 27-39 and 42-4 have been amended.

1-26. (Canceled).

27. (Currently Amended). An optical connector ~~(+)~~ for establishing multimedia-connections in a motor vehicle, the optical connector comprising:

a dielectric connector housing, the dielectric connector housing forming a receptacle for a mating connection with a complementary connector, ~~said the~~ receptacle of ~~said the~~ dielectric connector housing being formed by sidewalls and a rear wall of ~~said the dielectric connector~~ housing, ~~said the~~ rear wall having openings in it; therein;

at least ~~an~~ one optical connection element arranged in the receptacle, each optical connection element including an optical fiber section ~~in said connector housing, arranged in said receptacle,~~ for mating connection with a complementary optical connection element of the complementary ~~connector,~~ connector;

at least ~~an~~ one electro-optical component ~~including electronic circuits and~~ being arranged on a rear side of ~~said the~~ rear wall opposite to ~~said the~~ receptacle, each electro-optical component including electronic circuits; and

ESD protection means ~~(30), the EDS protection means~~ comprising:

at least one discharge section projecting towards the receptacle and  
having a free end being exposed to the interior of the receptacle to  
provide an ESD protection within the ~~receptacle, receptacle;~~ and  
at least one electrically conductive discharge finger penetrating said  
the rear wall through said the opening and terminating in said the  
discharge section, section;

wherein said the discharge section ~~(34, 36, 38)~~ is arranged in the vicinity  
of the optical connection element, element in such a way that the discharge finger forms  
a lightning arrester for protection of the optical connection element; and  
wherein the optical connector includes an external electrical shielding  
which penetrates the connector housing.

28. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~Claim 27, also~~  
Claim 27:

further including a U-shaped shielding clamp ~~that has~~ having at least  
one discharge section having a front edge, edge;

wherein ~~said at least one~~ each discharge section of said the ESD  
protection means also has a front edge, edge; and

wherein all said front edges running run flush in a lateral plane ~~that is set~~  
back with regard to front sides of said the optical fiber section.

29. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim 27~~ Claim 27, wherein the ESD protection means further comprises a plurality of discharge fingers, each discharge finger having at least one ~~with said discharge sections~~ section disposed thereon.

30. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 29, wherein the free ends of the discharge sections extend essentially parallel to the introduction direction of the complementary connector.

31. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 30, wherein the receptacle includes a single cavity having, at a front side, an opening for introducing the complementary connector and, at ~~said the~~ the rear wall, a pair of optical connection elements.

32. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim 31~~, Claim 31:

wherein the ESD protection means ~~has a further includes~~ first and a and second discharge sections, each of the first and second discharge sections including first and second conductive fingers extending transversely with respect to the introduction direction of the complementary ~~connector, and~~ connector;

wherein the ESD protection means further includes a third discharge section ~~which is~~ arranged between ~~said the~~ the pair of optical connection elements, and

wherein said the conductive fingers are assigned to a pair of electro-optical components.

33. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to claim Claim 32, wherein the conductive fingers extend along a front side of the pair of electro-optical components.

34. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to claim Claim 32, wherein the conductive fingers are offset transversely with respect to the introduction direction.

35. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to claim Claim 34, wherein the first and second conductive fingers are formed asymmetrically.

36. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim 31~~, Claim 31:

wherein the ESD protection means ~~has further includes~~ discharge conductive fingers, each discharge conductive finger having a discharge section; section;

wherein the first optical connection element of said the pair is arranged between a first and a third of the discharge ~~sections~~, sections;

wherein the second optical connection element of said the pair is arranged between a second and the third of the discharge ~~sections~~, sections; and

wherein the third discharge section is arranged between the first and second optical connection elements of said the pair.

37. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 36, wherein ~~the receptacle has a cavity, the cavity has at a front side an opening for introducing the complementary connector, the cavity of the receptacle is bounded by said the rear wall at a rear side opposite to the front side, and the rear wall has having~~ at least three openings through which the respective discharge sections extend.

38. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 36, wherein the discharge sections are stamped and formed from sheet metal at the ends of integral fingers.

39. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 27, wherein the ESD protection means ~~has~~ further includes a dedicated connection element for connection to an electrical circuit board.

40-1. (Canceled).

42. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim~~ Claim 36, wherein the external electrical shielding is designed in the form of an essentially U-shaped shielding clamp which engages around the dielectric connector housing rearwards.

43. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim 38~~ Claim 42, wherein the ESD protection means is arranged essentially centrally in the U-shaped shielding clamp.

44. (Currently Amended). The optical connector according to ~~claim 38~~ Claim 43, wherein the U-shaped shielding clamp has ~~integrally formed~~ integrally-formed press-on lugs for biasing the electro-optical components against the rear wall of the housing in the introduction direction.

45. (Withdrawn). Use of a protection element with an optical connector designed for the MOST-standard, the optical connector having a receptacle in a connector housing for mating connection with a complementary connector and having optical connection elements which are positioned in said receptacle, wherein said protection element is provided in the region of the optical connection elements and comprises at least one discharge section for each optical connection element arranged in the vicinity thereof, each extending towards said receptacle, and having free ends being exposed to the interior of the receptacle, thereby preventing an electrostatic discharge from an object which is introduced into said receptacle onto said optical connection elements within said connector, wherein said protection element has electrically conductive fingers which penetrate said connector housing.